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Draft report

Annex II

Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

1. In accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 70/82, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-third session, reconvened its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

2. The Working Group held meetings from 16 to 25 February 2016 under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa).

3. In accordance with the workplan extended by the Committee at its fifty-seventh session (A/69/20, para. 199), the Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Working paper by the Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities containing the draft report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.343);

(b) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation entitled "Time for the international community to decide whether it would support an effective set of solutions regarding the enhancement of the safety of space operations or wind up its work on this topic with inconclusive results devoid of any functional load and having marginal practical usefulness" (A/AC.105/C.1/L.345);

(c) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation entitled "Russian assessment of the initiative and actions of the European Union to advance its draft code of conduct for outer space activities" (A/AC.105/C.1/L.346);

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(d) Working paper submitted by the United States of America entitled "Proposal by the United States for an expert group on space objects and events" (A/AC.105/C.1/L.347);

(e) Note by the Secretariat containing an updated set of draft guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.348);

(f) Working paper by the Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities containing ideas for the way forward on the draft set of guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.3);

(g) Working paper submitted by China entitled "China's position paper on the issues of long-term sustainability of outer space activities" (A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.13);

(h) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation entitled "Considerations on the sum total of prime requisites and factors that should shape the policy of international information-sharing serving safety of space operations" (A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.14);

(i) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation entitled "Reviewing opportunities for achieving the Vienna Consensus on Space Security encompassing several regulatory domains" (A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.15);

(j) Working paper entitled "Proposal by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for an expert group on space objects and events" (A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.20).

4. The Working Group noted that different guidelines were at different stages of maturity and discussed the idea of a phased approach to its work, which could allow it to demonstrate the progress it had achieved on developing guidelines. That phased approach envisioned a first product of the Working Group, which could comprise those guidelines for which consensus could be achieved by the fifty-ninth session of the Committee. However, the Working Group did not achieve consensus on that proposed way forward.

5. Some delegations expressed the view that joint work on visualizing and subsequently drafting the set of guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities had begun in February 2012 and since then, owing to inputs made by the four thematical expert groups and national and joint contributions, the Working Group had before it a practically exhaustive package of draft regulatory provisions that identified promising approaches and developed and articulated options in line with the agreed goal of targeting measures that could enhance sustainability of outer space activities in all its aspects, including the safe and sustainable use of outer space for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of all countries. The delegations expressing that view also noted that the degree to which such provisions tended to enjoy consensus support varied. There was a need to reasonably extend the current workplan, within a streamlined strategy of achieving end results, so as to pursue in all earnestness the goal of consolidating a politically coherent and practically relevant set of guidelines intentionally encompassing all appropriate long-term solutions. In particular, such solutions should have actual effect in addressing aspects that were critical to the performance of essential

functions of enhancing the safety of space operations and providing viable and effective methods to control risks and evade deteriorating effects on the outer space environment. Those delegations also expressed the view that the Working Group should be guided by a collaborative approach and act in good faith so as to introduce more pragmatic standards and bring the required measures of systemic order to its continued activity, and strongly presumed that further negotiations would be conducted in a manner that was intelligible and conducive to reaching equilibrium in discussions and achieving sets of perceptions assuring a better and broader understanding and integration of, and support for, the wholly integrated objectives of ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

6. The view was expressed that conference room papers A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.14 and A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.15 contained gross distortions of the policy of a member State of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and that it was highly objectionable that they had been circulated at the fifty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The delegation expressing that view also objected to any further resources of the United Nations being used to process those documents in the six official languages of the United Nations unless all such references were removed.

7. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to present to the Committee at its fifty-ninth session a revised version of document A/AC.105/C.1/L.348 reflecting updates to the text as presented during the present session of the Subcommittee, to be considered by the Committee.

8. The Working Group agreed that it would continue to work in the intersessional period. The Working Group agreed to hold an intersessional meeting in Vienna on 6 and 7 June 2016, directly preceding the fifty-ninth session of the Committee, as a good way to advance its intersessional work and to discuss the revised version of the draft set of guidelines as referred to in paragraph 7 above. Those informal consultations to be held on 6 and 7 June were deemed important to prepare for successful results at the fifty-ninth session of the Committee.

9. The Working Group noted that the Chair of the Working Group would consult with the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat regarding scheduling of the fifty-ninth session of the Committee so as to allow the possibility for the Working Group to meet during that session, benefiting from interpretation services.

10. On [...], the Working Group considered and adopted the present report.